

The brief sketch of the customs of the tribe here given will be sufficient for an understanding of the tales recorded in the following pages; but it seems desirable to preface the collection by a short discussion of a few of the more important features that characterize the tales of the tribe. About one half of the volume is taken up by myths referring to transformers. While in most American mythologies there is only one transformer who is, at the same time, the culture hero, we find here several personages to whose actions the present shape of our world is due. These are: the Coyote, the three brothers *Qoā'qlqal*, *Kokwē'la*, and the Old Man. The first and the second of these are decidedly the most influential and important personages in the whole mythology of the tribe.

The Coyote as well as the three brothers are in a way the culture heroes of the tribe, and the general characteristics of the legends referring to these beings are very similar to legends of this class as found among other American tribes. The story of the so-called "Culture Hero," who gave the world its present shape, who killed monsters that infested the land, and gave man the arts that make life worth living, is one of the most widely distributed Indian myths. In what we might call the prehistoric era there was no clear distinction between man and animals. At last the culture hero appeared, and transformed some of the beings of those times into animals, others into men. He taught the latter how to kill animals, how to make fire, and how to clothe themselves. He is the great benevolent being, the helper of mankind. But the same great culture hero appears in other groups of tales as a sly trickster, who vaingloriously thinks himself superior to all other beings, whom he tries to deceive in all sorts of ways, and who is often punished for his presumption by the superior powers of his proposed victims. No method of warfare is too mean for him, if it promises to lead to victory; no trick is too low to be resorted to, if it helps him to reach his end. Neither is the end sought for one that we might consider worthy of this great being. It is selfish to the extreme, the possession of riches or that of beautiful women being his chief aim. It is very difficult to harmonize these two aspects of the myths of the culture hero. Some investigators, prominently Dr. D. G. Brinton, and also Dr. Walter Hoffman,² have held that the explanation is to be sought for in a gradual deterioration of a purer and more primitive form of the myth, and that the more vulgar tales are later additions to the old cyclus of myths. If this were so, the problem would still remain, why there is such a general tendency of making the ancient culture hero the principal figure in these tales. But it seems to my mind that the frequent occurrence of this phenomenon requires a different explanation. It does not seem likely that all mythologies